

THE BAPTIST

WISDOM

FOR THE YOUNG

Y E A R :

Or, the Difference Miller, John

Betwixt the *Old* and *New-Smile*.

S H E W I N G,

That the *Reformed Churches* should not Alter their
Old-Smile, but

That the *Romanists* should Return to It.

to my self. Wm. 1700. Conc. Nic. Can. 6.

L O N D O N.

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THE
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TO THE
READER.

THE Old and New-Style having been of late
the Subject of many Debates, occasion'd chiefly
by the near approach of next February, when,
instead of Ten, there will be Eleven Days difference be-
twixt them, and thereby the Julian and Gregorian Ac-
counts set at greater odds than ever; and finding this Con-
troverfy not generally understood, I thought I could; not at
present, do a more acceptable piece of Service to the Publick,
than put this matter into as clear a Light as I could; and
shew, with as much brevity as possible, not only the Unre-
asonableness of the Romanists pressing of the Reformed
Churches to comply with them in the Gregorian Account,
but also endeavour to persuade them to put an End to the
Difference, by returning to the Obedience of the first Gene-
ral Council at Nice, and an Union with the Universal
Church. The Church of Rome, for above One Thou-
sand Years, were in this matter conformable to the rest of
the Christian World, and the Popes, at their Inaugura-
tion, were sworn to continue it. Viz. Se quatuor pri-
ma Concilia servatuos, usque ad unum Apicem. i. e.
That they would critically observe the first four Gene-
ral Councils, to the least tittle. Can. Sanct. Dist. 16.

and

"nd how the late Pope Gregory XIII. dispensed with himself in this matter, I know not; but I am sure, that his famous Predecessor of that Name, Pope Gregory the Great declared his esteem of the Four first General Councils, to be equal to that he had of the Four Gospels. So that Popes are divided in their Judgments, as well as other Christians, and whereas, but an Age or two past, the Romanists pres'd the Protestants with the Authority of Councils, which they pretended to be on their side, they have now publickly rejected the Determination of the most famous Christian Council in the World, since that of the Apostles; and the design of this Paper is to press them to the Obedience of it, and to return to the Communion of Saints, and no longer continue in a Schism, and Separation from all the Christian Churches in the World.

ERRATA.

PAGE. 2. l. 27. add two p. 4. l. 27. add on, or p. 13. l. 1. for ~~esolation~~
read ~~visually~~ p. 20. l. 22. the ~~and~~ that transpos'd.

THE

Of the Julian Year, the Time of the Jewish Passover, and the Decrees of the Christian Church for finding of EASTER.

WHEN J. Cesar had Conquer'd Egypt, (where all sorts of Learning, and especially Astronomy, had long Flourish'd) he brought with him thence, a more Exact Account of a Solary Year, than any that had been before used among the Romans; and, though this New Calendar was drawn up by Soſigenes, and other great Astronomers, yet being Publish'd by Julius Cesar's Authority, was call'd the Julian Year. But, the Romish Priests, having been long used to another sort of Year, mistook the Rules, and instead of every Fourth, they reckon'd Inclusively, and Intercalat'd a Day every Third Year; which, being observ'd by Augustus, and Restor'd to what Julius had at first Establish'd, was still call'd the Julian Year, and made Authentick in all the Roman Empire.

THE Julian Year consisted of 365 Days and 6 Hours; but because of the Inconvenience of Insert-

ing of Six Hours, at the end of every Year, they were order'd to be reserv'd to the end of 4 Years, when they came to a Whole Day, and then to be Inserted at the 24th Day of February. For the Old Roman Year ended at Feb. 23, on which was observed the Feast of *Terminus*, and the Old *Intercalary Month* was always inserted at that time. And because the *Intercalary-dayes* (according to the Method of the *Egyptians*) were never accounted any part of Month, or Year, but only an *Appendix* to them, and *Cato in Tit. Dig. ff. 98.* expressly saith of the Practice of the *Romans*, *Mensem intercalarem additicium esse, omneque ejus dies pro momento temporis observandos, i. e.* That the *Intercalary Month* was no part of the Year, and though it consisted of 28 days, was esteemed but one moment of Time; Therefore the *Romans*, in the *Julian Year*, accounted the 24th day of February, that is, the 6th of the *Calends of March*, two days together; which is the reason that in our *Calendar*, *Leap-year* is call'd *Bissextile*, or the Year, in which the 6th of the *Calends of March* came twice over, or was continued for Two days together: We in *England*, having been very antiently Subjects of the *Roman Empire*, receiv'd the *Julian Account*; and, pursuant to the Method of the *Romans*, our *Parliament*, in the 21st Year of *Henry the 3d*, pass'd an *Act*, That in every *Leap-year*, those dayes at the 24th of February, should be accounted but for one. Now, because in the *Western Church*, the *Feast of Matthias* hath been very Antiently kept on the 24th day of February, and there might a doubt arise, about the true Day of this *Feast in*

Leap-

Leap-Year; the Rule that had been observed in that Matter, was, to keep it on the Second of those Two Days in Leap-Year, according to the Old Verse,

Postiore die Festum Celebrato Mathia.

AND on the Second Day we also kept it in England, till a few years since it was altered by an Injunction of a Late Arch-Bishop, who thought it not so Agreeable to the last ~~Act of Uniformity~~ placed the *Vernal Equinox* on the 25th day of *March*; and presuming, that his measure of a *Solar Year* was exactly true; he had no foresight of the Precession of the *Equinoxes* in the *Julian Months*, and gave no other Direction, but that the said *Equinox* should be continued on the 25th Day of *March* for ever. TUS

THE Jewish *Passover* was, by the Law of *Moses*, to be kept on the 14th Day of the First Month, Exodus 12th, and *Levit. 23*, &c. And on the 16th day of the same Month, they were to offer up the First Fruits of their Corn, upon which account this First Month was call'd *Abib*, that is, a Ripe Ear of Corn; and so their *Passover* was always in that Month in which their Corn began to be Ripe. And because their Corn in *Canaan* usually began to be Ripe about the *Vernal Equinox*, as appears from *Philo*, *Josephus*, and others; therefore, the Jewish *Passover* was at that time of the Year, and usually answer'd to our *March* or *April*.

WHAT the Jews Antiently used Lunary Month, appears beyond Exception in this Law of the Passover, which being on the 14th day of the Month, was always at the Full-Moon; and therefore the Jews, to make their Lunary Month Conformable to a Solar Year, were forced, in every Two, or Three Years, to Intercalate a Month, and have 13 Months in their Year. And when that was to be done, they seem antiently to have had no other Rule, but when their Corn was Ripe; and though that might not be so certain a Guide, for the True Measure of a particular Year, yet, in Ten thousand Years, would never err much, but was as fixed and certain as their Seasons and Hours.

BUT, after the Jews had been Conquer'd by the Babylonians, Persians and Greeks, and carry'd Captives into all Nations, they saw the different Seasons of Harvests in the several Climates, and as in order to an Uniformity, were forc'd to establish their Year upon Astronomical Rules, and Reduce it into Tables, that so the Jews, in their Dispersion all the World over, might be United in their Feasts, and keep their Passover (as they now do) at the same time.

of Our Saviour, seem to have taken from J. Caesar's Calendar. For that Emperour, and his Successor, *Augustus*, were very kind to the *Jews*, indulged them the use of their own Law; excused them from Tribute every Seventh Year, and sent Sacrifices to *Jerusalem* for the Daily Oblation. For which Reasons, the *Jews* were extremely fond of them; and (as even *Suetonius* Relates) lamented many Days and Nighes together at the Funeral of the former. This was it that made them so readily comply with the New Calendar of *Julius Caesar*, as far as their Law would give leave, and at least take the time of the *Vernal Equinox*, and *Suns entrance* into *Aries* from thence; the first of which was there fix'd at *March the 25th*, the other at the *18th* Day of the same Month. And whatever Rules of this nature were once agreed on by the *Sanhedrim*, or Chief Council at *Jerusalem*, they took care to Communicate to the *Jews* all the World over.

NOW its evident from the *Gospels*, that Our Saviour was Crucified on *Friday*, at the *Jewish Passover*, and Rose again from the Dead on the *Sunday* following; being, at that time, call'd, *The first day of the Week*, Mat. 28. 1. Mark 16. 1, 2, &c. And when the *Christians* thought it necessary to keep up the Memory of so great a *Deliverance*, by a Solemn Festival, they call'd theirs alfo the *Passover*, and had no other Rules for the finding of it, but what the *Jews* had for theirs, and left the Calculation of it to them. For most of the *First Christians* were

Con-

Converts from *Judaism*, and Zealous for the Rites of the *Law of Moses* (*Acts 21. 20.*) and one *Philip*, giving an Account of a *Paschal Synod*, in the Second Century, begins his Epistle with this Observation, *That the Apostles being wholly taken up with Preaching of the Gospel to the several Nations of the World, did not establish any Rules among Christians for the exact time of Easter.* And, *Epiphanius* farther relates, *That there was an old Apostolick Constitution, by which the Christians were forbidden to trouble themselves with scrupulous Calculations; but keep it at the same time as the Christians of Jerusalem, who being Converts from the Jews, understood the Methods and Rules that were used by them for the discovery of the Passover.* Now, all the Bishops of *Jerusalem*, till *Adrian* destroy'd it, were originally *Jews*, as is observed by *Eusebius*; and so long the Christian World received the time of *Easter* thence: but after *Jerusalem* had been quite Ruin'd by the Emperour, and there were no more Bishops there of the *Circumcision*, every Church began to have Rules of their own, and the Christian World was divided about their *Feast of Love*; and though many *SY-NODS* were Assembled to determine this Matter by *Pope Victor* at *Rome*, *Theophilus* at *Cesarea*, and other Bishops in other Churches, yet still the Dissension continued, and Disputes increased, till at last, *A. D. 325*, they were happily ended by *Constantine the Great*, in the First General Council at *Nice*, Rules establish'd, and Tables drawn up for the exact discovery of the Time of *EASTER* for ever.

THAT

THAT the Christians, even from the Beginning, did observe this Feast, is evident from St. Paul, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. *Christ our Passover is Sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old Leaven, neither with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.* And Origen, an early Christian Writer, in his *Comments on St. John's Gospel*, Explains those words; *Now the Passover, a Feast of the Jews, was at hand;* to have been used by the Evangelist, to distinguish that from the *Christian Passover*, which was then observed.

THE greatest part of the Christian World, since the First Council of Nice, have conform'd themselves to the *Paschal Rules* that were there establish'd; and the whole *Western Church*, at the time of our Reformation from the *Church of Rome*, knew of no other. As in other things, so in this also, it was the Method of our Reformation; to depart no farther from the *Church of Rome*, than she had from the Truth, (see *Can. 30, publish'd A. D. 1603.*) and, in keeping of *Easter*, conform'd her self to the same time that was then observed in *Italy, France, Spain, Germany*, and most other Churches of the Christian World, and all this in Obedience and Conformity to the Decrees of the First General Council. And, to prevent all difference upon this Subject, our Church hath, in her very *Liturgy*, Establish'd by *Act of Parliament*, not only from that Council at *Nice*, inserted this General Rule, *That Easter-Day is always the First Sunday*,

day after the First Full Moon, which happens next after the 21st day of March; and, if the Full Moon happens upon a Sunday, Easter-Day is the Sunday after. But also, lest any difference should arise about the New-Moons, hath, in the First Column of the Calendar, put down all the New-Moons for a Complete Cycle of 19 Years, with Direction to take the Paschal New-Moons from that TABLE for ever; and all this according to the Decrees of the First Council at Nice, and Practice of the Universal Church.

AND though the Vernal Equinox, since the time of that Council, be gotten from the 21st to the 20th of March; and this TABLE of New-Moons is now above Four Dayes false; yet, in things undetermined by God's Law, we have alwayes Prefer'd Peace and Unity, and the Communion of Saints, before a Needles Separation and Division.

IT was once the Objection of Mr. Baxter and his Party, That our Church did not keep Easter, according to our own Rules; and that some Years our Easter was not the First Sunday after the First Full Moon that was after the 21st Day of March. But had that Scrupulous Person understood the Cycle of New Moons inserted in the First Column of our Calendar, and that the Paschal Moon is to be taken thence; he would have seen his Mistake, and been ashamed of the Objection.

NOW

NOW because the *Nicene Council*, in Composing these *TABLES*, hath made use of the *Julian* year, this also is usually call'd the *Julian Account*: the *Julian* year hath been vulgarly used from before the Birth of our Saviour, and the way of finding *Easter* for above 1300 years.

*Of the Gregorian ACCOUNT, and
New-Style.*

FROM the time of the First *Nicene Council*, till the year of our Lord 1582, the *Julian* year, and *Nicene Rules* were made use of in most Countreys in the World for finding of *Easter*, till in that Year Pope *Gregory* the 13th, by his sole Authority, Cancell'd all this *Old Account*, Introduc'd a *New Calendar*, Composed chiefly by *Aloysius Lily* and his Brother, and New *TABLES* for the finding of *Easter*: Because the *Vernal Equinox* was then from the 21st gotten to the 11th of *March*, he ordered *Ten Days* to be left out of the Month of *October*, so that the 15th Day was that Year next after the 4th, from whence arose the Difference betwixt the *New* and *Old Style*, our Fifth of *October*, thereby becoming their 15th.

C

AND,

AND, that my Reader may have a clear Apprehension of this matter, I have here Inserted the Month of *October*, Transcribed from one of the Original *Calendars*, that were Printed and Published by the Command and Authority of the said Pope *Gregory the XIIIth*, for the very Year 1582.

October.

October. The first day of October, the 1st day of October, the 2^d day of October, the 3^d day of October, the 4th day of October, the 5th day of October, the 6th day of October, the 7th day of October, the 8th day of October, the 9th day of October, the 10th day of October, the 11th day of October, the 12th day of October, the 13th day of October, the 14th day of October, the 15th day of October, the 16th day of October, the 17th day of October, the 18th day of October, the 19th day of October, the 20th day of October, the 21st day of October, the 22^d day of October, the 23rd day of October, the 24th day of October, the 25th day of October, the 26th day of October, the 27th day of October, the 28th day of October, the 29th day of October, the 30th day of October, the 31st day of October.

(11)

October.

| Dies Mensis. | Cui defunt 10 Dies pro correctione Anni Se- laris. |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Remigii Episc. & Confess. |
| 2 | |
| 3 | |
| 4 | Francisci confessoris. Duplex. |
| 15 | Dionysii, Rustici, & Eleutherii Mart. Semi- dupl. cum commemo. S. Marci Pape & Con- fessor. & S. S. Sergii, Bacchi, Marcelli & A- palei Martyrum. |
| 16 | Calisti Pape & Martyr. Semidupl. |
| 17 | |
| 18 | Luce Evangeliste. Duplex. |
| 19 | |
| 20 | |
| 21 | Hilarionis Abbatis, & commemoratio S. S. Ursulae et Sociarum virginum & Martyrum |
| 22 | |
| 23 | |
| 24 | |
| 25 | Chrysante & Dariae Martyr. |
| 26 | Evaristi Pape & Martyr. |
| 27 | Vigilia. |
| 28 | Simoni & Iude Apostolorum. Dupl. |
| 29 | |
| 30 | |
| 31 | Vigilia. |

I need not Insert a Translation of this Month, it being obvious to every common Reader, what a Skip here is, from the Fourth to the Fifteenth Day; and how the Commemoration of all those Saints, that were usually on those Ten dayes, were that year added to the Fifteenth Day. Now, by this Regulation of Pope *Gregory*, the 15th Day of *October* was that which was call'd the 5th, the 16th what was formerly the 6th, and so on; by which means there arose Ten Days difference betwixt the *Julian* or *Old Style*, and the *Gregorian* or *New*. A thing scarcely to be parallell'd, except with that Humorous *Edit* of *Alexander* the Great, who, when he found his Souldiers superstitiously averse from Fighting, because it was the Month *Desius*, Publish'd a Decree, that for the future, that Month should not be accounted the Month *Desius*, but *Artemisius*; and immediately engaged and beat the Enemy: Or else, with that more absurd Decree of the Men of *Athens*, who, when *Demetrius*, in the Month of *March*, had a great desire to be initiated into their greater and lesser Ceremonies, one of which was constantly in the Month of *November*, the other in *August*, they ordered that that *March* should be forthwith called *November*; and when those lesser Rites were over, they Decreed again, that that same Month should be called *August*, and it was so; of which the Poet *Philippides* thus Jested upon *Demetrius*,

O Τετραετίανη επικαίρων μηνών Βιβλ. 1. c. τοιούτης ΟΤ

That contracted a whole Year into one Month,

Plutarch in the Life of Demetrius.

Much such was the power of the Papal Bull in contracting the 31. Dayes of October into One and twenty, and making the 15th. Day immediately succeed the 4th. And because the same Pope foresaw, that in Tract of Time, that Correction also would be false, and the *Equinox* again Anticipate in the *Julian* Months, he farther Decreed, that after the Year 1600, Three even *Centuries* should pass without any *Intercalations*, though they were otherwise *Bisextile* Years, *viz.* A. D. 1700, 1800, 1900; and then, that the 4th even *Century*, or A. D. 2000. should be *Bisextile* again; and that same Method of making only every 4th even *Century*, *Bisextile*, should continue for ever. By which means it comes to pass, that though the *Gregorian Account* hath hitherto differ'd but 10 Days from the *Julian*; yet, after the 24th Day of *February* next, when in the *Julian* Year, a *Bisextile* Day is to be Intercalated; there will be 11 difference betwixt them: And a Letter Dated on the *First* of *March*, A. D. 1700, *N. S.* will be 11 Days before one dated the same day, according to the *Julian*, or *Old Style*: And at the end of the next *Century*, the Difference will be 12 Days, and so on.

TO

TO discover the *New Moons* for ever, instead of the *Golden Number*, and *Tables* of *New Moons* fitted to them, the same Pope *Gregory* appointed *Tables* of *Epacts*, and others of *Equation of Epacts*, to continue for ever. And because the taking of Ten Days out of the Month *October*, perverted the order of the *Dominical Letter*, the same Pope was forced to Cancel the *Old*, and establish a *New Cycle* of the *Dominical Letter*, quite different from the former.

That

That the Reformed Churches should not lay aside the Julian, or Old-Style, to Establish the Gregorian, or New-Style.

HAVING thus far given a True, tho' Short Account of the *Julian*, or *Old*, and the *Gregorian*, or *New Style*; the next thing that I shall here briefly inquire into, is, Whether it be Expedient for the *Reformed Churches* to continue the *Julian Account* and *Old Paschal Tables*, which have been all along continued in the *Christian Churches* from the *Primitive Times*, or, if we leave that, should follow the *New-Style* of *Pope Gregory*. And tho', at first view, it might seem reasonable for us, in an indifferent thing, and where they are nearer the Truth, to comply with the *Church of Rome*; yet, in my Opinion, in the Matter before us, 'tis by no means adviseable.

First, BECAUSE in matters relating to *Religion*, 'tis best not to make any Alterations, except upon great and pressing occasions, and where our Church may get some considerable advantage by the Change; or unless the matter in Dispute be determin'd by the *Word of God*, and 'tis evident from thence, that our *Church*,

Church is in an Errour. But, as I shall shew presently, such alteration as this is not likely to produce good, but mischief to our Church, and occasion new differences, as it hath already done in the *Palatinate Churches*; and the matter before us, is, in its own nature, purely indifferent, and never determin'd one way or other, neither by *Moses* and the *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, nor by *Christ* and his *Apostles* in the *New*.

Secondly. IN things thus left indifferent, we ought principally to be govern'd by the Determination of *General Councils*; and when they also are silent, by the *Decrees* and *Canons* of *National Synods*. And, to apply this Rule to our present purpose, if we look back to the *Primitive Church*, its evident what heats and feuds were then amongst Christians, occasion'd by the different Rules they had for finding of *Easter*. And so long as this matter stood undetermin'd by a *General Council*, every *National Church* follow'd its own way, and all the Threats of *Rome*, by *Victor*, and other Bishops of that See, signified very little towards ending of the Controversie, till it was, at length, happily determin'd by the First *General Council* at *Nice*, to whose Authority all the Churches of the World quietly submitted, and Peace and Uniformity were establish'd, till at length, above a Thousand years after, Pope *Gregory* revived the difference, and set up the Authority of that one See above the Decree of a *General Council*. And this the Bigots of that Religion pretend to justify. How did the *Church of Rome* at the beginning of the *Reformation* triumph over the *Protestants*, that the *two sides* *cannot* *meet* *above* *us*? has *God* to *Fathers* *aband*?

Fathers and Councils were all on their side ; but after they had been sufficiently baffled by Bishop Jewel and other Learned *Protestants*, and it hath been sufficiently proved that the *Fathers* and *Councils* are on our side, they are run into the quite contrary Extream, and in a needless controversy, left the *Protestants* in full possession of a *General Council* on their side, whilst they themselves ran schismatically into a manifest *contempt* of it, and publickly own'd the laying of it aside. Had the *Reformed Churches* done this, the whole *World* would have been fill'd with *Clamours* against them, and a great *Oustry* made of their *Schism*.

Thirdly. WERE the Church of *Rome* in the right, and the *Gregorian Style* far better than the *Julian*, yet we should be backward in complying with them, both upon the account of the *Romanists*, who will construe this to be a *Compliance* with the *Decree* of Pope *Gregory*, whose *Language* in this matter is very absolute and imperious. *Nulli ergo hominum licet hanc paginam voluntatis nostra infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire, si quis autem hoc attentare presumperit, indignationem Omnipotentis Dei, ac beatorum Petri & Pauli Apostolorum ejus, se noverit incursum* — and again, *qui secus fecerit Excommunicationem incurrit, i. e. Let no one dare to contradict this our Decree (about the New Style) and if any one shall presume to attempt it, let him know that he incurs the indignation of Almighty God, and of his holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul — and shall forthwith be excommunicated out of the Church.* Hitherto we in *England* have layn under this horrible *Curse*; and what will our present *Compliance* be construed, but a fear of the *Papal Thunder*, and at least a *taut Submission*

fion to that Chair ; *Hoc Iacobus velit* . Much less should we comply upon the account of the *Protestant Dissenters*, who have been always jealous of our inclining too much towards *Rome*, and in this matter should we do it, will most certainly censure and upbraid us for the *Compliance*, and observing the *Decrees* of a *Pope of Rome* made since the *Reformation* ; and let us before-hand consider how we shall be able to answer them. However it was the *Wisdom* of our first *Reformers* to comply as far as possible, with the *Rites* and *Customs* of the *Church of Rome*, and thereby bring over many of them to our *Communion* ; yet since now there is little of that nature to be hoped for, our *wisest Bishops* have laid aside all thoughts of working upon them any further by *compliance*, and much rather take care to *Convince* the *Dissenting Protestants*, who are far the more numerous Party, that we are not *Papishly* inclined. When there was lately a *Controversy* in *England* about the *Feast-day* of *Matthew*, our late *Arch-Bishop*, to prevent a seeming *compliance* with the *Rules* of the *Romish Church*, order'd it to be kept on the 24th day of *February*, even in *Leap-Year*, notwithstanding the *Church* had been then long in possession of a different *practice*, and was in some measure countenanc'd in it, by an *Act of Parliament*, that order'd the 24th and 25th of *February* in *Leap-Year*, to be esteem'd as the same day. If we look back into former *Ages*, we may learn from our own *Bede*, what *Struggings* and long *Contentions* our *Bishops* had with the *Church of Rome*, rather than they would alter their old way of keeping of *EASTER*. One thing in that *Controversy* is very remarkable to our present purpose, viz. That the *Bishops*

Bishops of Rome did then urge against our Bishops, the Decrees of the Universal Church in the Council of Nice, (Bede Eccl. H. l. 2. c. 19.) and that their way of finding Easter was practised in Africa, Asia, Egypt, Greece, and almost all the World: (ib. l. 3. c. 25.) Now it seems very unreasonable, after we have been perswaded to comply with them upon those Reasons, that the same Persons should now endeavour to perswade us to leave that very way which they have taught us, and that too, not with (as formerly) but against the Authority of the first general Council, and the consent of the Asian, African and Greek Churches, which are now on our side. So far will our compliance be from promoting the peace of the Church, that in our joining with the Romanists, we shall manifestly fall off from the Grecian, Asian and other Eastern Churches, who to this day critically observe the Rules of the first Nicene Council. There is one considerable reason why we should be govern'd by the Rules of that Council, and that is, because we were at that time Subjects of Constantine the Emperor, who summon'd that Council, and confirm'd their Sanctions, and did then submit to their Decrees about keeping of Easter, as appears from that Emperors Letter preserv'd by Eusebius in his Life of Constantine. One of our late Acts of Parliament (Stat. 1. Eliz. ch. 1.) declares the Authority of that Council, as next to that of the Holy Scriptures, and our present Act of Uniformity, hath not only Authoritatively settled the Nicene Creed, but the Nicene Rules also for finding of Easter; so that this matter cannot be alter'd without an Act of Parliament and change of our Liturgy, which since we have been so averse to, for the sake

of our own *Protestant Difsenters*, it will seem very unreasonable to do it in compliance with the *Romanists*.

That which will be a matter of the greatest moment for us to consider is, whether this alteration by Pope *Gregory* be correct and true, or whether, if we should now comply with them, some new *Pope* may not correct these *Alterations*, and think some other way more exact, as was famously done in the correct Edition of the *Bible* by Pope *Clement VIII.* who in 2000 places chang'd the *Infallible Edition of the Bible*, publish'd but two years before by *Pope Sixtus V.* and then we shall be again importun'd to dance after them, and leave the *Gregorian*, as they would now have us leave the *Julian Account*. I shall therefore in the next place examine the Errors and Mistakes of *Pope Gregory* in correcting the Year: and that

First, IF we would have corrected the *Paschal Tables*, we ought not to have reduc'd them to the Order of the *Heavenly Bodies*, at the time of the *Nicene Council*, 325 Years after *Christ*, which is all that is pretended to by *Pope Gregory*, but to the time of our *Saviour* and the *first Christian Passover*; to the end that *Equinox* should not have been brought back to *March* the 21st, but to *March* the 25th where it was at the time of our *Saviour's Crucifixion*. And whereas the *Romanists* now commemorate our *Saviour's Resurrection* on the first *Sunday*, after the first *Full-Moon*, that is after the 21st of *March*, our *Saviour* did not rise from the Dead, till the first *Sunday* after the first *Full-Moon*, that was after the 25th of *March*, if the *Equinox* in that Age was their Guide for the *Passover*. This was certainly a great oversight of the *Infallible Chair*, and may be a sufficient reason why we should not join with them. Se-

Secondly, THERE is great reason for us to suspect, that the Jews in the time of our Saviour did not mind the Equinox, but the Sun's entrance into *Aries*, which according to the prevailing opinion of that Age was Eight days before it. Thus *Josephus* (*Antiq.* l. 2. c. 10.) saith, *That the Jewish Passover was the 14th Day of the first Month, the Sun being in Aries*, and *Anatolius* from several old Jewish Authors relates, *That that was the first Month among the Jews, in which the Sun entered the first Sign of the Zodiac*; and perhaps the Jews might think, that their *Paschal Lamb*, which was always to be a *Male*, might have some relation to the Sign of *Aries* in the *Heavens*. Now its certain, that about the time of our Saviour, Learned Men distinguish'd betwixt the time of the Equinox, and of the Sun's entrance into *Aries*, and made this last Eight Days before the other, as appears from *Varro*, *Ovid*, *Manilius*, *Colamella*, *Pliny*, and the very *Calendar* of *J. Caesar*, in which the Sun's entrance into *Aries* is *March the 18th*, and the *Vernal Equinox March the 25th*. When *Anatolius* plac'd the *Equinox March the 22d*, he expressly said, that the Sun was then got *Four Degrees* in *Aries*, and therefore entered *Aries March the 18th*, and in *Bede* the Sun's entrance into that Sign is the *15th of the Calends of April*; or *March the 18th*. Nor was this the opinion of the Greeks and Romans only, but of the *Egyptians* also, as appears from *Manetho's Apotelesmata*, who (l. 2. v. 73, 74, 75.) expressly saith, *that the Summer Solstice was, when the Sun was in the 8th Degree of Cancer*. And this Entrance of the Sun into *Aries*, was what both Jews and Christians chiefly looked after in discovering the time of the *Passover*. *Hippolitus* was the first Christian Writer tha:
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publish'd *Paschal Tables*, and in them imitated the *Jews*; these *Tables* are now extant, and in every 16 Years *Easter* twice fell upon *March* the 18th, long before the *Equinox*, but not before the *Sun's* entrance into *Aries*. *St. Cyprian* in his Book *de Paschate* gives the Rules for discovering of *Easter* both among the *Jews* and *Christians*, and its evident that he begins the *Paschal Month* at *March* the 4th, so that the 14th day of the *Paschal Month* may be *March* the 17th, and the 15th day on *March* the 18th. For so the *Jews* agree that the 15th day of *Nisan*, may be upon that day that the *Sun* enters *Aries* (*Maimon. de Consecr. Cal.*) *Victorius* particularly explains the *Paschal Terms* according to the *Christians* both in *Egypt* and *Rome*, and, with small difference from the *Jews*, makes the *Paschal Term* begin at *March* the 5th, and so the 14th day of the first Month might be *March* the 18th. The *Christians* at length about *A. D.* 260 began to understand that the *Sun* entered *Aries* at the *Vernal Equinox*, and *Dionysius* Bishop of *Alexandria* inform'd the *Christian World*, that they ought not to keep *Easter* before the *Vernal Equinox*. After this was compiled that Canon that forbud the *Christians* to keep *Easter* as the *Jews* did before the *Equinox*, for which the *Jews* were blamed also by the Emperor *Constantine*, they still keeping their old way of the *Sun's* Entrance into *Aries* 8 days before the *Equinox*. I shall only add, that the *Acts of Pilate* (a very Old Book, quoted by *Justin the Martyr*, and other early Fathers) had our *Saviour's* Crucifixion on the 18th of *March*, as appears from *Epiphanius*, which would have been very absurd, if the *Jewish Passover* could never have been so early. If therefore its evident that the *Jews* in

in the time of our Saviour, and the Christians of the 1st and 2^d Century, did not mind the Equinox in computing of Easter, but the Sun's entrance into Aries 8 days before it, then this will be a convincing Argument against the Truth of the Gregorian Account, that makes Easter depend upon and succeed the Equinox. Nor is it to any purpose for the Romanists to reply that the Jews err'd in keeping the Passover at that time, since all that the Christians can do, is to keep their Easter at that time when our Saviour was Crucified and rose again, which was at the Jewish Passover, whether they observed the right time or not.

Thirdly. THE Gregorian Rule for finding of the Equinox, makes the Precession come to three days in 400 Years, that is, one day in 133 $\frac{1}{3}$ Years. Now I think it may be prov'd that the Precession is much greater, and comes to one whole Day in 120 Years. For the Demonstration of this, I shall refer my Reader to that excellent Book of Lidyas's *de Anni Solaris Mensura*, and may myself hereafter confirm what he there layeth down, with other convincing Arguments, which that Learned Man never thought of. For these Reasons I take the Gregorian Account to be very injudicious and false, and therefore not to be follow'd by Protestants. Not to mention that if we would have reduc'd our Easter to what it was at the Nicene Council, there had been an easier method and free from the inconveniences of the Gregorian. There need have nothing else been done, but declaring the 11th of March to be the Paschal Equinox, and that in every 120 Years, it should have advanc'd one day farther, for its not material what day of our Solar Month we call the Equinox, so that we be agreed of the

the time. And then, instead of introducing perplex'd and difficult *Tables of Epacts*, the *New-Moons* might be discover'd for ever by the *Old Tables*, only going backward one Day in 312 Years, from the time of the *Nicene Council*, at this time 4 Days, according to that known Rule in *Calis et sic*. This had really answer'd the whole design of the Church of *Rome*, in restoring of *Easter* to the measures of the *Nicene Council*, and yet had neither disturb'd the *Julian Account*, nor perverted the *Old Order* of the *Dominical Letter*, nor destroyed the use of those *Old Tables of New-Moons*, and the *Golden Number*. To conclude therefore this short *Dissertation*: Its very observable, that when God Almighty order'd the *Jews* to keep the *Passover*, and thereby bare in memory the day of their deliverance out of *Egypt*, and at that *Feast* teach their Children the reason of their keeping of it; God did not give the *Jews* any exact Rules for finding of the Day in a *Solar Year*, but only bade them keep the 14th Day of their *First Month*, or that Month in which their Corn began to be ripe, be it according to the different Seasons, sooner or later; and in that *Feast*, notwithstanding such difference, the *Jews* were to say in their *Hymns* and *Prayers*, and teach their Children, that on that Day God had *deliver'd* them out of *Egypt*; and so in the *common* and *civil* use of Words, the same *Day* of the same *Month* is reckon'd the same time, tho' the *Month* fell earlier or later in the *Solar Year*. At the time of our *Saviour*, the *Jews* err'd in the time of their *Passover*, (if our Rules that make it depend upon the *Equinox* are true) and made it depend upon a time 8 *Days* sooner; and yet when this was the Day that the *Sanhedrim*

drim had agreed on, and they that sate in Moses Chair had solemnly appointed; our Saviour and his Apostles never scrupl'd the time, but Christ expressly saith of it, Luk. 22. 7. *That that was the day in which the Passover ought to be kill'd.* And so the Jews affirmt, that it was always in the power of their Chief Courts to appoint their Passovers, and tho' they err'd, yet were it to be obey'd. Talmud Sanhed. p. 13. &c. Corri p. 212, 214. Maimon, Cons. Cal. p. 349. and the Jews quote for that opinion, the words of the Law. Deut. 17. 9, 10. so too eth midrash

THE chief thing aim'd at by God in all these Festivals, was the Hearing and the Devotions; the Prayers and the Thanksgivings, and when they were duly perform'd, his People might be the less solicitous for the circumstance of time. The best Rule about the time, and what our Saviour himself practis'd, is to follow the Commands of our God and Parents; and though they should Err in some minute Circumstances of time, yet so long as the End of the Feast is obtain'd, and Peace and Unity preserv'd, we are sure to be blameless. And this hath been the method of the Church of England and other Reformed Churches, who constantly kept Easter according to the Decrees of the Fathers of the first General Council; who happily made Peace and Union in the Christian World, and according to the practice of all the Christians in the World, except the late Schismatics of the Church of Rome, who have in the last Century, broken the Decrees of those very Councils that they themselves magnify, and forsaken the practice of all the Christians in the World. One of the Principal things that God oblig'd the Jews to, was to keep the Passover in the first Month of the Year, and

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yet the *Romanists*, after all the *Corrections* of Pope *Gregory*, do very often keep *Easter* in the *last Month* of the Year instead of the *first*, for the *Roman* Year begins at the 25th day of *March*, and yet *their Easter* may be on the 21st, 22d, or 24th day of *March*, and so in the *last*, and not in the *first Month* of the Year. I do not mention this as a matter of such great moment, as to deserve our altering our *Old Rules*; for, so long as we be within the compass of that which the *Jews* call'd the *first Month* of the Year, its *not* very material by what Name we call it, but only to shew the many *Errors* and *Mistakes* of the bungling *Corrections* of the *Church of Rome*, and that there is no reason at all for us to follow them, but either to keep to our *Old Rules* and *Unions* with the *Christian World*, or else, if we must be changing, to do it more correctly than they have done. I shall end this short *Dissertation*, with that Excellent *Advice* of the wisest of *Kings*, and wisest of *Men*, twice mention'd in the short *Book of Proverbs*.

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